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JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

1999 YEC records upswing on decisions

By Carl M. White Associate Editor

A. E. Wood Coliseum on the Mississippi College campus in Clinton was the site for 36 decisions for Christ as Mississippi teens gathered to bring in the pear 2000 at the 1999 Mississippi Baptist Youth Evangelism Conference (YEC), on Dec. 31.

Though the estimated attendance of around 800 did not approach the record of over 3,000 last year, Don Lum, youth consultant for the Evangelism Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB), said the conference was a success in the area that matters the most — decisions for Christ.

The 1999 YEC saw 29 professions of faith out of 36 decisions. The 1998 YEC registered 63 decisions, including 15 professions of faith.

"The conference went really well and I think everyone was pleased with the content and the accomplishment," Lum said.

Most of the decisions were registered during the invitation given following the message of Danny Lanier, an evangelist from Little Rock (Miss). Lanier is a long-time evangelist with a heart for teenagers, Lum said. Lanier's message challenged students to not just talk the talk, but to also walk the walk with Christ.

The youth heard testimonies from Alison Dickey, a Tupelo native and student at Ole Miss; Doug Buckles, the Dandy Dozen lineman on the 5A state champion Madision Central football team; and Misty Futral, finalist in the 1999 Miss Mississippi pagent and daughter of MBCB executive director-treasurer Jim Futral.



Kevin Williams

three words: Thee, Me, and We. Basing his message on the call of Isaiah found in Isaiah 6, Futral challenge the teens to enter 2000 seeking the "Thee" experience of the presence of God, to join Isaiah in answering God's call by saying "send me," and to join with others as "we" take on the challenges of the next millennium.

The 2000 YEC will return to the two-day format of previous years. It is scheduled for Dec. 28-29 in Wood Coliseum.

For more information, contact Lum at P. Ø. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205. Telephone: (601) 292-3278 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 278. Email: dlum@mbch.org



Y2K READY — Trent Bell, (center in blue shirt), youth minister at Bethesda or toll-free outside Jackson Church, Metro Association, is surrounded by the youth from his church during the (800) 748-1651, ext. 278. E-1999 Mississippi Baptist Youth Evangelism Conference. (Photo by Carl M. White) mail: dlum@mbcb.org.

Ventriloquist Dennis Lee (center) of Dallas uses masked volunteers from the audience as his ventriloquist dummies in part of his act during the Mississippi Baptist Youth Evangelism Conference on the Mississippi College campus in Clinton on Dec. 31. Mark Long (right), pastor of Perkinston Church, Perkinston, and Virgil Walters, a youth sponsor from Midway Church, Meridian served as Lee's dummies. (Photo by Carl M. White)

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PUBLISHED SINCE 1877

JANUARY 6, 2000

VOL. 123

No. 46



Misty Futral

Other speakers included Jim Futral and Scott Crenshaw, a youth evangelist from San Marcos, Tex.

Also featured were music leader Kevin Williams of Clinton; magician and comedian Mark Fore of Hendersonville, NC.; and Dennis Lee, a ventriloquist from Dallas, Tex.

Crenshaw challenged Christian students to answer the call of God to ministry.

In the final sessions, Futral gave each teen a laminated card with

YouthLink participants safe after Tampa shooting

TAMPA, Fla. (BP) — Three small youth groups attending YouthLink 2000 in Tampa were staying at the Radisson Bay Harbor where, on Thursday afternoon about 3:20 p.m., an employee sho and killed four other employees and wounded three other persons. The man killed another woman several miles away when he attempted a carjacking and later was apprehended by police.

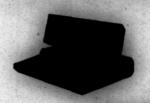
Phil Briggs, chair of the Tampa site committee and professor of youth ministry at Southwestern Seminary, in Ft. Worth, said all youth and sponsors registered at the Radisson Bay Harbor have

Students altoss the country also had an opportunity to pray for the victims of the shooting during the live satellite link between the seven cities where. YouthLink 2000 was being held simultaneously. Students from Wedgwood Church in Fort Worth, Texas — the site of a tragic Suptember shooting that claimed eight lives — were to town for the YouthLink event, but were staying in private homes according to Briggs.

Living in a post-modern world

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

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VOLUME 123 NUMBER 46 (ISSN-0005-5778)

Published weekly except weeks of July 4 and Christmas by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, 515 Mississippi Street, Jackson, MS 39201. Subscription \$8.35 per year payable in advance. Economy plans available for cooperating Mississippi churches. Periodicals postage paid at Jackson, MS. Member, Association of State Baptist Papers. Deadlines: News items—one calendar week prior to requested publication date. Advertising—two calendar weeks prior to requested publication date.

Vell, it appears we dodged the Y2K bullet. For all the ballyhoo and hand-wringing, it's pretty much over. Hospitals didn't go dark, aircraft didn't collide in mid-air, and banks didn't run out of money.

Some experts attribute the quiet holiday weekend to the massive proactive effort in this country that poured \$100 billion into computer fixes and contingency planning. Other experts say the problem was overblown from the start.

However, for those people who can't get through life without a crisis of some type,

here's a new list of dates about which they can worry, courtesy of The Wall Street Journal and other sources:

◆ February 29, 2000 — Most big mainframe computers are programmed to know that years divisible by 100 are not normally leap years (years divisible by 400 are leap years, but computers don't know that.) That means some computer systems may encounter more than the usual number of anticipated quadrancial problems

ed quadrennial problems.

October 10, 2000 — the first day that newly Y2K-reprogrammed computers will have to deal with a six-digit date.

◆ January 1, 2019 — If Y2K contractors did a widely-known "quick and dirty" fix this time around instead of a full inspection and update of every line of programming code, they only bought 20 years of time instead of permanently repairing the Y2K problem. We could have Y2K deja vu all over again (apologies to Yogi Berra).

◆ January 19, 2038 — For dating reasons

◆ January 19, 2038 — For dating reasons too complex to explain here, the increasingly-popular Unix computer operating system could experience it own Y2K melt-days on this day.

down on this day.

There. Combined with their own local and regional crises, that should give the sign-watchers and worriers more than enough to watch for and worry about for the remainder of their lifetimes.

Meanwhile, let's quit worrying about

the future and get back to the serious business of winning Mississippi and the world to Jesus, because we've got our work cut out for us in the post-modern, post-Christian culture in which we live.

There is an increasingly prevalent attitude in this country that religion — Christianity, in particular — has served out its usefulness and can now be deposited on the ash heap of history along with all the other quaint, useless ideas of a past era.

Concomitant with that attitude is the concept that Christianity is no more or no less important, or relevant, than any other "faith" in the smor-

gasbord of spiritual offerings available in America today.

Do you like Buddhist teachings on inner peace? Put a serving on your plate. Does the Rastafarians' worshipful use of marijuana appeal to you? Take some. How about the rules of some Islamic sects that permit polygamy? You can have a sample of that with no problem.

Leave room for a taste of comet worship, animal sacrifice, voodoo, astrology — anything you want, really — and you'll have an idea of what passes for religion in this country today.

The problem is, it's all spiritual junk food and will inevitably lead to a fatal case of eternal indigestion.

It's crucial that those of us who hold the Light share it with this dark and lost world.

AM I OLD. FASHIONED TUST BECAUSE I DON'T KNOW WHAT POST-MODERN MEANS?"



It's the only Light that can make a heavenly difference for those who don't know the Savior as we know the Savior.

Everyone who willingly chooses to follow Jesus Christ has the privilege and responsibility of sharing the Gospel with lost people in the house next door, down the block, across town, throughout their state, around their nation, and across the world.

Let's start the new year/century/millennium by rededicating ourselves to the mission that has been put before us by our Lord. It won't be easy in this religion-hostile culture in which we live, but we must do it.

Always remember that there is no earthly force that can stop us, and when it comes to the future, don't sweat the details.

The One who literally spoke the world into existence has that under control, too.

Do you remember the childhood story of Little Chicken Kluck? It all began when this little chicken named Kluck was hit on the head with a nut. Being an alarmist kind of chicken who was ready to believe in conspiracy theories about the Council on Foreign Relations, the assassination of President Kennedy, and a one-world gov-

clusion that the sky was falling.

Kluck ran and told Henny
Penny the hen. The argument
sounding sensible, Henny
Penny joined Kluck and ran to
tell Cocky Locky the roster.
They in turn ran to tell Lucky
Ducky, who also believed them.
So they all ran to tell Goosy
Poosy. Finally, the fanatical

ernment, he jumped to the con-

Hearing the story and seeing opportunity, Foxy Coxy said they should all run into the woods. Once the fox had them in the woods, he ate them all up.

This anonymous fairy tale is a lesson about being careful who you listen to, who you believe, and who you follow.

For some reason, I kept thinking about this story during all the hype about the Y2K bug. Several Klucks ran across

A PASTOR'S PERSPECTIVE:



The sky is falling, or maybe not

By Carl M. White, Associate Editor

the landscape convincing us disaster was imminent and we better all get ready

better all get ready.

Midnight passed, the year 2000 began, and CNN declared all was well around the world. One article I read estimated that the United States spent in excess of \$100 billion on Y2K readiness. Perhaps it did save us from Armageddon. Perhaps a few Foxy Coxys laughed all the way to the bank.

Of course, there were a few Y2K problems. Somewhere in New Jersey a guy returned a rented video tape on Jan. 3, 2000, and was charged \$91,000 for being 99 years late.

It is alarming how eager people are to believe disaster and Armageddon predictions. Books and magazine articles predicting the end have sold like hotcakes. Yet, over and over again, end of the world predictions end up being false.

Consider Hal Lindsey's The Late Great Planet Earth, published in the early 1970s. According to Lindsey's reading of the times, Israel was going to repossess all of Jerusalem, rebuild the Temple, and resume animal sacrifices. Russia would invade Israel, but the U.S. would not be able to do much because by this time we would have moved from a weak to an even weaker position as a military and world power.

Or consider John Walvoord's

Or consider John Walvoord's popular book Armageddon, Oil and the Middle East Crisis (1974). Walvoord predicted that the U.S. would approach self sufficiency in oil production, which would trigger an Arab oil boycott, which would in turn create a crisis of such proportion that it would start the apocalypse. Like Lindsey, Walvoord said the U.S. would be less and less of a power and influence in world affairs. When was all this to begin? Surely by the mid 1980s.

These guys were wrong at every turn, and so were the radical Y2K predictions. Maybe Y2K was a real threat and all the attention and work avoided a real disaster. We may never know the truth. However, one truth remains unchanged. The words of the old hymn express it adequately:

I known not when the Lord may

at night, or noonday fair. Nor if I'll walk the vail with Him,

Or meet Him in the air.
But I know whom I have

And am persuaded that He is

To keep that which I've committed

Unto Him against that day.

WMU publishes new women's Bible study

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP) -Responding to a growing number of requests for Bible study materials, national Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) has published the first two books in a new Bible study series,

"Timeless Bible Truths for the 21st Century Woman."

The first two titles are "Women of Faith: Living Lives That Matter," by Carolyn Dipboye of Oak Ridge, Tenn., and "Until Christ is Formed in You," by Darbo Velma Stevens of Fort Worth, Texas. A third book will be released in the summer of 2000.

According to Jan Turrentine, WMU's managing editor for products, these books were produced in response to an expressed need for Bible studwritten by women and for women.

She said WMU recognizes that Bible study groups

are growing not only in number but also in depth, and these books address those needs.

In writing "Until Christ is Formed in You," Stevens hoped that studying Christian charac-ter traits "would inspire women to a newer and deeper understanding and apprecia-tion of those qualities." She sees this study as a primer for Christian growth.

Virtues such as faith and wisdom, power and persistence, kindness and friendship, and mercy and forgiveness are addressed with contemporary anecdotes and applications.

Stevens recommends that groups study the characteristics in the order presented "because they build from self-worth to love like stair steps."

After the initial study of the

book, a woman could revisit the

in Gratitude and Generosity."

Stevens relates the story of a young pastor's wife who was overwhelmed with gifts and acts of kindness by the members of their new pastorate.

The young woman thought,

TIMELESS BIBLE TRUTH

OR THE 21ST CENTURY WOMA

Proverbs 31. Each woman, however, teaches a lesson in faithfulness, the focus of the book.

Dipboye believes that faith-fulness "is about day-to-day learning and growing, being and doing.

"It is the journey inward into ongoing spiritual renewal and growth, but it is also the journey outward in Christian service."

expands these lessons of faith to teach contemporary women the value of faithfulness in today's world. Turrentine said

the books may be used for individual study or by small groups, such as Bible study groups, Sunday School classes or discussion forums.

The format lends itself to group mem-bers studying one chapter per week and then participating in a discussion group with other students.

Each book contains helpful exercises at the end of each chapter which are

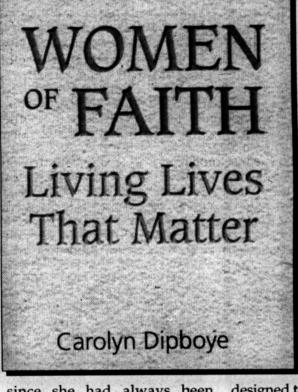
designed to "move women from studying the Bible to actually doing something as a result of what they understand the Bible to say to them," she noted.

WMU is looking at possible topics for the future, but final



BAPTISTS

THE SECOND FRONT PAGE



particular chapters that address a timely need in her life.

Velma Darbo Stevens

Stevens says she has personally lived a lifetime of trying to grow these characteristics, and she believes that the chapter on "Growing in Power and Persistence" may be the most difficult for women today to apply because of our cultural

conditioning.
She acknowledges that women are taught to be gentle, a godly characteristic in itself, but that power is seen as a masculine virtue.

Another trait that may evoke a struggle is that of "Growing since she had always been taught that it was better to give than to receive, she must find some way to "repay" those acts of kindness.

Stevens attempted to teach her that a simple "Thank you" was sufficient, but she knows women do experience a need to reciprocate for gifts and thoughtful acts.

Women of Faith: Living Lives That Matter" details the stories of several women of the Bible with a view to relating their examples to present-day women.
According to writer

Dipboye, contemporary women learn "how to be faithful in the time and circumstances in which we live" by studying women of the Bible.

Dipboye points out that the women studied are diverse: Deborah contrasts to Priscilla; Rahab to the virtuous woman of

plans will be based on the response to the first books, Turrentine added.

The Timeless Bible Truths series is available in LifeWay Christian Resources book stores or through WMU Customer Service, 1-800-968-7301. Each book costs \$8.99.

PUBLISHED SINCE 1877

JANUARY 6, 2000 VOL. 123 No. 46

Clarke College in Newton, now a division of Mississippi College in Clinton, is placed on academic probation for the second year. The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools recommends strengthening the school in two areas: long-range planning and increased financing.

The executive committee of the Georgia Baptist Convention publicly affirms its intention to retain Jack Harwell as editor of The Christian Index, the Georgia Baptist news journal. Complainants have been seeking Harwell's dismissal because of his theological views.

The Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville is given the green light by the executive committee of the Southern Baptist Convention for development of a western assembly at Glorieta, New Mexico, as soon as clear title to the land can be obtained.

Bivocational pastor shot

JACKSON, Tenn. (BP) — A Tennessee bivocational pastor, shot three times during a traffic stop while on duty as a police officer, is expected to make a full recovery, according to a spokesperson for Jackson-Madison County General Hospital.

Roy Wyatt, pastor of Darden Church, Jackson, Tenn., was listed in fair condition in the hospital's intensive care unit. He has been recovering there since the Nov. 26 shooting.

In addition to his duties as a pastor, Wyatt, 50, is a police officer for the Parsons, Tenn., Police Department.

Wyatt and his partner stopped a car driven by Michael Pearcy, who was wanted for questioning by the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation. After Pearcy allegedly opened fire on

Bureau of Investigation. After Pearcy allegedly opened fire on Wyatt, the officer's partner returned fire, killing the suspect.

Wyatt was shot in the face, chest, and leg, according to Doyle Neal, director of missions for Beech River Association.

"The doctors told us that he lost his right eye," Neal said, "but

he is in good spirits."

Neal said the pastor's recovery will be slow. "He's been through a rough time," he said, "but the churches in this area are supporting the family through prayer."

Wyatt is a well-respected pastor in the area, according to Neal. Last May he joined Tennessee Baptists in South America for Crusade Rio '99, and he also participated on a mission trip to Russia, Neal said.

Wyatt and his wife, Judy, have two grown sons. Neal said both sons are serving on church staffs.

Missionary: Hispanics integral to missions

ROCKVILLE, Va. (BP) — It's time for Southern Baptists to take stock of the tremendous contribution Hispanics are making in the world of missions — and for Hispanic Baptists to "rise up" and use their cultural gifts in missions around the world, a missionary to Latin America told Hispanic Baptist leaders.

"When I see what God is doing among the Hispanics, I realize that ... we are not here in the United States because of political or economic situations. We are here because God has a plan to reach a lost world," said

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April 1-8

April 8-15

April 15-22

May 6-13

May 20-27

June 3-10

June 17-24

July 1-8

July 8-15

July 22-29

Aug. 12-19

Aug. 19-26

Sept. 23-30

Oct. 14-21

Oct. 21-28

Nov. 18-25

Dec. 2-9

Oct. 28 - Nov. 4

Nov. 25 - Dec. 2

Sept. 30-Oct. 7

April 29 - May 6

Jason Carlisle, a missionary to Uruguay who was raised in Latin America and now helps mobilize Hispanics for world missions.

Hispanics for world missions.

Carlisle addressed 29

Hispanic Baptist leaders who met with International Mission Board (IMB) staff, including president Jerry Rankin, for a dialogue at the board's Missionary Learning Center in Rockville, Va., on Dec. 9-10.

Participants came from states with large Hispanic populations like California, Florida, and Texas, as well as from smaller Hispanic pockets in states like Pennsylvania and Alabama.

The dialogue acknowledged the dramatically increasing significance of Hispanics in the U.S.

The Latino population in the United States has grown 38% since 1990, while the overall population has increased a mere nine percent, according to Newsweek magazine. By 2005, Hispanics are projected to be the largest minority in the country — representing nearly a quarter of the total population.

quarter of the total population.

By harnessing God's gift of Hispanics at home, both North American and international missions will benefit, Carlisle said.

"The United States is in a spiritual crisis... We're falling apart. Hispanics have something to give the United States. We have to rise up," Carlisle said. "If we use kingdom principles, we make the powers of darkness tremble."

The program included presentations by IMB staff, question-and-answer periods and an extended dialogue with Rankin. Participants also heard testimonies from Benjamin and Barbara Herrera, recently appointed missionaries to Mexico, and Olga Nava, missionary in residence and adjunct professor at the Hispanic Baptist Theological School in San Antonio, Texas.

More than 50 Hispanic missionaries currently serve in 25 countries around the world. About half serve in Latin countries like Argentina and Mexico, but the board's regional leaders say missionaries like Pablo Zorzoli, International Service Corps worker in France, and Joe and Gloria

AISSIONS RIESSING International Mission Roard (IMR) president

MISSIONS BLESSING — International Mission Board (IMB) president Jerry Rankin (left) listens as Rudy Sanchez, chairman of the executive board of the Baptist General Convention of Texas — the first Hispanic to hold that position — voices a prayer of blessing for 121 Southern Baptist missionaries leaving for the field. Sanchez was one of 29 Hispanic Baptist leaders who participated in a dialogue with IMB leaders Dec. 9-10 at the board's Missionary Learning Center in Rockville, Va. (BP photo by Roy M. Burroughs)

DeLeon in Russia are experiencing good success among their target people groups. The dialogue stressed

The dialogue stressed strengths of Hispanic missionaries, such as strong family traditions and easier acceptance by some other people groups.

by some other people groups.
Richard Hernandez, pastor of AntioquÓa Mexican Baptist Church and president of the San Antonio Hispanic Fellowship in Texas, noted that Hispanics often are more readily accepted than Anglos because their physical characteristics can help them blend into Middle Eastern or Southeast Asian crowds.

Because Hispanics are familiar with discrimination, other minorities view them with an emotional connection — that they are "one of us. Just because of who we are, doors open to us," he said.

Some Hispanics have historically struggled with discrimination at the hands of Anglos or even other Hispanic subgroups. Don Kammerdiener, the board's executive vice president and former missionary to Colombia,

assured participants the time is ripe for Hispanic involvement.

"There have been days when you have not been well accepted in this country," he said. "I'm here to tell you that... the day has arrived when you are full partners in all God has called you to, and today we look forward to the best day we've ever had."

the best day we've ever had."

Hispanic leaders spelled out three specific changes they hope to see in the board's programs: intentionality about involving Hispanics in missions, production of quality promotional and language materials, and more Hispanics on staff.

Rankin said he looked forward to a growing partnership with Hispanics in missions. "We were thrilled to be able

"We were thrilled to be able to share our Great Commission vision with Southern Baptist Hispanic leaders and strengthen our partnership for mobilizing Hispanic churches for joining us in our global task," the IMB president said.

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Computers utilized to link pastor's wives

DRAIN, Ore. (BP) — Pastors' wives as well as other vocational ministers' wives across the Northwest Baptist Convention (NWBC) have begun using computer e-mail to shrink distances and stay connected.

"This grew out of a desire for ministers' wives across the Northwest to stay in touch," said Elaine Peters, pastor's wife from First Church, Drain, Ore. "It's important to know they are not alone; there are

others out there.

The idea for the group first surfaced last spring when a number of ministers' wives were together sharing their feelings of isolation and a need to be more connected at an annual "Oasis" rest, recreation, and renewal retreat for NWBC professional church staff and spouses.

"I had been involved in an interdenominational pastors' wives support group for over a year," Peters said. "I knew how to do it, got e-mail addresses from the wives

and we began."

At first there were just a few participants. Word of mouth has brought a continual increase.

"To get to where I live, you go to the end of nowhere, take a right and go 10 more miles," said Debbie Stagg, pastor's wife at Majestic Mountain Church, Pierce, Idaho.
"I'm very isolated in a small logging

town and don't often get to be with other ministers' wives," Stagg said. "I'm looking for this to reduce the isolation."

She has no computer in her home, thus she e-mails from the nearest library that is

The egroup, as it is called, officially began in May and now has several dozen women participating, with more being added each week, Peters said.

"The ministers' wives feel supported and loved," said Tricia Ellis, pastor's wife at Wenatchee (Wash.) Valley Baptist Church. "We are able to learn about one another, our families, share prayer concerns and reach

out to the needs of one another."

Ellis also provides support to pastors' wives via a personal hotline for crisis situations. The majority of the matters dealt with by the e-mail group involve prayer requests; exchanging ideas and discussing parenting issues; health concerns; and, of course, humorous stories.

"This has been an encouragement to me," said Jan Peters, pastor's wife from Glendale (Ore.) Church. "It's made me real-ize I am not the only pastor's wife who worries about my husband's health, the rigors of dealing with children, or the fact that I never seem to have quite enough time."

Susan Doherty, director of marketing for eGroups.com, an Internet enterprise specializing in such Internet connections, noted, "What makes an egroup different than sending an ordinary e-mail is its convenience, and the additional features that are available. Besides sending e-mail messages, the women can have a group calendar, real-time chat and real-time voice communication," said Doherty of the technology available.

The largest group for which eGroups.com provides support is a missionary organization that needs to provide secure communication in sensitive areas around the world.

The same technology and security is provided to the Northwest Wives group. Currently there are more than 5 million users with more than 300,000 different groups using eGroups.com services, Doherty said.

Elaine Peters serves as list manager and of the nwbaptistmoderator wives.egroups.com group.

Ministers' wives who would like more information about joining this group may contact her at PPeters222@aol.com.

A GATHERING WITH GOD

A number of times through the Scriptures the words are found, "sanctify yourselves," or "sanctify yourselves unto the Lord." It was a call from God or an appeal from the Lord's leader calling for the congregation to set themselves apart at a time, and a place, for a special purpose.

God desired to meet with his people, to speak to his people, to do a new work among them, and to bless them. In that spirit, I send out a call to all Mississippi Baptists and beyond, to come and join with the Lord for a great gathering praise, encouragement, encounter, and empowerment.

On January 21-22 the Mississippi Baptist Evangelism Conference will be held at Ridgecrest Church in Madison. To conclude the conference on Saturday, Mississippi Baptists will gather at Mississippi



Directi

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

Coliseum on High Street in Jackson to celebrate Jesus through the presentation of "God for Us."

Through the cooperative efforts of both the Evangelism and Church Music Departments of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, thousands will join together on a Saturday afternoon for a glorious, once-in-a-lifetime kind of experience.

Regardless of where you live across the state, it will be worth your time and effort if you can possibly sanctify yourselves and set this time and opportunity apart to meet with God and his people. Between three and four thousand singers will be gathered from across the state. Our Mississippi Baptist State Orchestra, joined by many of their friends, will also be filling the place with sounds of

Can you imagine ten thou-sand people gathered together in 2000 to celebrate the Savior who reached all the way down to earth to lift us all the way to Heaven! This is one of those memorable "you absolutely don't want to miss it" events!

Years ago when we were sending men to the moon, a friend of mine made the long journey from Mississippi all the way down to Cape Canaveral to see the last moon shot. They had said that it would be the last one of the program, but lit-tle did we realize that it would absolutely be the last rocket to the moon in our lifetime.

My friend, and some of his friends, drove straight through from Mississippi to south Florida. Well, actually he drove while his buddies slept. They had intended to take turns but he just kept on driving and they kept on sleeping. They arrived in time but my friend who had served as chauffeur took a short nap, leaving instructions to wake him when the countdown began to get close to the end.

As the hours turned into minutes they tried to wake him with only momentary success. He fell back to sleep! The minutes became seconds and he slept on. Ignition. Lift-off. The huge Saturn rocket was up and on its way to the moon, and my friend slept on!

Sure, he could see a video of it and his buddies could tell him about it, but that's not quite the same! He missed it and it has never been repeated. So put the Mississippi Baptist Evangelism Conference on the calendar, get you a nap, wake up, bring a crowd with you, and let's Celebrate Jesus!

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Web site gives glimpse of 'New Century'

The Sunday School group of LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention has established a presence on the world wide web, with the introduction of www.lifewaysundayschool.com

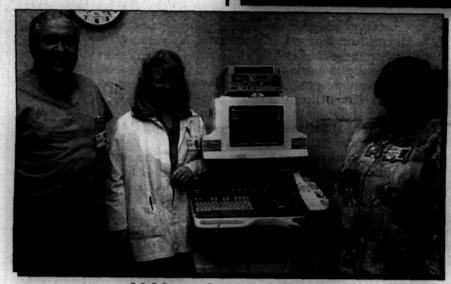
With this new site, LifeWay's Sunday School group has created a one-stop resource with the most up-to-date informa-tion about "Sunday School for a New Century," the Sunday School curriculum that will be available beginning with the

Fall 2000 quarter. On the site, samples of the new curriculum can be seen in an area called "Preview New Resources." They can only be read using Adobe Acrobat Reader, so with a click, visitors can download the Acrobat Reader at no charge. After getting the free download, another click of the mouse brings up a sample lesson for any of the age groups—preschool, children, youth or adult.

Also, the "Contact Us" area allows visitors to e-mail their own questions and comments to be read by and answered by a real live person. Within a few automated minutes, an response will be sent back to the person submitting the question, giving an approximate time an answer can be expected.

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McManus, Lane, and Branson

Echocardiographic Laboratory has received notice of its accreditation by the Intersocietal Commission for Accreditation Echocardiography Laboratories. First Church, With the accreditation of the echocardiography program, we now are the only Mississippi Jacksonville, healthcare provider with an

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (BP) Homer G. Lindsay, Jr., pastor of the nation's third largest Southern Baptist church, announced Dec.19 he will retire.

pastor retires

Lindsay's announcement stunned the congregation and staff of the First Church of Jacksonville, Fla. Lindsay, 72, has been at the church for nearly 31 years. He succeeded his father, Homer Lindsay, Sr., who came to First Church in 1940.

During Lindsay's pastorate, the church grew from 2,600 in 1969 to more than 26,000 members today. The church campus includes property on 11 city blocks as well as an auditorium that seats 9,200.

First Church's annual pastor's conference is considered to be the largest of its kind in the nation with more than 6,000 attending last year's meetings.

of heart disease. Pictured with an echocardiography unit are (from left) Bill McManus, technical director; Stephanie Lane, staff sonographer; and Joan Branson, staff sonographer. For more information about the program, call (800) 948-6262.

Women on Mission (WOM) Como Church, Como enjoyed fellowship with members of 14 other churches as Stuart Calvert shared from her book, Transformed: Shaped by the Hand of God. Kathy Burns, WOM consultant for the Mississippi Woman's Missionary Union, led in a time of prayer. Lisa Steward of Wyatt Church led in music.



Women on Mission of Como Church, Como

Mississippi College (MC) held its second annual December Commencement ceremonies on Dec. 17. Degrees were conferred on 207 candidates, with 43 of these obtaining advance degrees. Fourteen law degrees were awarded. John Meadors, associate professor of Christian Studies Philosophy, gave the com-mencement address. Phil Jones, associate pastor of music ministries of Morrison Heights Church, Clinton, gave the invo-

cation. L. David Murray, associate pastor, First Church, Zachary, La., gave the benediction. Pictured (from left) are Howell Todd, president of MC; Murray; Meadors; and Jones.



Todd, Murray, Meadors, and Jones

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Trinity Church, Vicksburg, called Jeremy Peagler of Raleigh as minister of youth. He is a student at Mississippi College.

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Wade Church, Moss Point,

has called Brandon Rainey youth minister effective Oct. 3. He has been the minister of youth Toxey Church, Toxey, Ala.,

Rainey

since 1996. He is a graduate of the University of Southern Mississippi. Bill Barton is pas-tor of Wade Church.

Randall Creel has resigned as pastor of New Hope Church, Meridian, to answer the call to full-time vocational evangelism. After over 21 years as a pastor, he is now available for revivals, Bible conferences, Winter Bible Studies, Harvest

Days, and other preaching engage-ments. Creel may be contacted until Feb. 27 at New Hope Church, (601) 693-4492, or at home (601) 693-8419.



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EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Practicing love 1 John 3:11-24

By Carl M. White

On the news, a distraught mother is shown leaving police headquarters. Her son is under arrest. The charge is rape and attempted murder. To the camera she cries out, "He really is a good boy; in his heart, he really is good." We can understand a mother's desire to believe in her son, but the true indication of the condition of the heart is behavior.

We are living in a time when behavior in one arena is said to be irrelevant to behavior in another. The President is a liar and adulterer, but he is a good president, and anyone who says otherwise is mean-spirit-ed. A baseball player is banned from the game because of gambling, yet fans cry for his inclusion in the Hall of Fame because of his

considerable playing skills. Anyone who disagrees is being unfair, unloving.

The test of love (vv. 11-16).

John declares for us that the true test of love is in behavior, and the beginning point of behavior is in the heart. From the sands of antiquity, the death of Abel points to an evil heartbeat in Cain.

The old saying goes, "Sow a thought and you reap an attitude. Sow an attitude and you reap a deed. Sow a deed and you reap a character. Sow a character and you reap a des-



starts with the thought. Previously, John Previously, John demanded that faith must be demonstrated through actions (1:6; 2:4, 9). Now he carries this demand a step farther. The test of whether or not Christ dwells in our heart is how we treat one anoth-

tiny." The whole process

er. Do we have love for the brethren (and sisters) of the faith?

The proof of love (vv. 17-18). Next, John extends an example. He who claims the love of God and possesses the goods of the world and does not help a fellow Christian in need is deceived. The proof of love is in action, not words of empty sentiment.

Perhaps nothing hurts the witness of the church more than two Christians who cannot get along. During the height of the controversy that racked our beloved Southern

Baptist Convention for more than a decade, the joke was than a decade, the loke was told of two pastors who met at the annual meeting. They were sizing one another up, each claiming to be Biblebelieving, soul-winning, conservative pre-millennialist. One declared he was of the Sandy Creek tradition. The Sandy Creek tradition. The other said he was of the Charleston tradition. They eyed one another in suspicion till one said, "Die heretic," and the other uttered, "Burn in hades sinner!"

The intended joke is, in light of John's teaching, not in the least funny. We may never know this side of Heaven how many souls were lost to a sin-ner's hell because of our inability to love one another.

The confidence of love (vv. 19-24). John indicates that our confidence in relationship to Christ and in our relation to the truth is built by love for other believers. "If our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God," he says in verse 21.

I have met believers who have a single-minded devotion to one issue. For example, consider abortion. Some Christians are so devoted to eradicating abortion, if you don't totally agree with them, they will question your faith.

I believe as Christians we are called to a higher standard, and that standard is agape love. If your single issue causes you to be unable to love a brother or sister in Christ, your devotion to the issue has superseded your devotion to Christ and become a form of idolatry. The heart condemns you.

This is Christ's command-ment, John says. We are to believe in Jesus as the only Son of God, Savior of the world, and we are to love one another. Love is the test, love is the proof, and love is the confidence of our faith.

White is a member of First Church, Clinton.

FAMILY BIBLE SERIES

Focus on prayer Matthew 6:1-15

By Lynn Jones

A child wrote this letter to God: "Our pastor talks about you all the time. Is he a friend of yours, or do you just know him through business?"

That's a good question that could be asked not just of pastors, but of all of us. Do we have only a formal knowledge of God, or do we have a warm fellowship with him?

If we are to maintain a warm fellowship with God, then prayer is a key. God expects his people to pray to him with honest and humble hearts.

The importance of this subject is seen in the amount of space that Jesus devoted to prayer in the Sermon on the Mount. He gave us specific guidelines for prayer.
Pray sincerely (vv.

1-6). Jesus emphasized the need for sincerity by condemning the

way that many gave and prayed in his day. Some who gave did so in a way designed to attract the most attention. The same was true with their praying. They loved to pray in places where the most people would see them.

Your motive as well as your action is important to Jesus. Our motive in prayer should be to communicate sincerely with the Lord, not to try to impress

Many homes use water purifiers on their water supply in order to improve the water's quality. What we need in the Christian life are "heart purifiers" that will purify our motives and bring us to God in prayer with deep sincerity.

Pray trustingly (vv. 7-8). Jesus also encouraged us to avoid meaningless repetition in our prayer. This was characteristic of some heathen religions that encour-

aged the meaningless babble of certain phrases. Jesus was not condemning perseverance in prayer. He encouraged that (Luke 11:5-13).

What Jesus instructs us to do is not to try to impress or to inform God. He knows our needs before we ask. We need to pray with simple trust that he hears us.

A little boy called his neigh-bor and said, "My mom is vacuuming and my dad is mowing the lawn. I need someone who can hear me." You can be assured that your Heavenly Father always hears you.

Pray comprehensively (vv. 9-13). In these verses, Jesus gave us the Model Prayer. This prayer is not one we are endlessly to repeat word-for-word. Instead, it is a model for the kinds of concerns we are to have in prayer and the pattern for our approach to God in prayer.

A thoughtful consideration

of this prayer will greatly broaden the horizons of our praying.

The first movement of the prayer is upward toward God. It focuses on God's name, God's kingdom, and God's will. Before we pray about our own concerns, we should focus on God. This has a way of putting our concerns in the

right perspective.

The second focus of the prayer is on our need for daily bread, forgiveness, and victory over temptation. The prayer then concludes with a doxology of praise to God.

Prayer should never be an exercise in selfishness. It is not

our bringing to God a shop-ping list of things that we need. In fact, the words "I," "me," and "mine" do not appear in the prayer. The requests all use the plural pronouns, "our," and "us." When we come to pray, we pray not just for ourselves but for all of those around us as well.

The scope of the prayer is broad and powerful. Nothing lies outside the reach of prayer except that which lies outside

the will of God. Practice forgiveness (vv. 14-15). After Jesus had given the Model Prayer, he expanded on one request in the prayer. That request was for God's forgive-ness. He emphasized that if we are to experience the forgive-ness of God, we must demonstrate in our lives a forgiving spirit. Our willingness to forgive others is powerful proof of the fact that we have experienced the forgiveness of God.

Jones is pastor of First Church,

LIFE AND WORK

Time to value

Ps. 90:12; 103:15-16; Ecc. 3:1, 17; Eph. 5:8-17

By Michael Jones

"Time is on our side."

"Oh, I have plenty of time, I'll

"Do you have some time to kill?"

"You're just wasting your time!"

These are all phrases that on any given day, most of us can find ourselves repeating. For some, there seems to be plenty of time. To others, time is a valuable commodity. Does the Bible have anything to say about the way we spend our time?

The answer is yes, the Bible does offer much insight as to how a Christian is to spend his or her time.

Let's take a look at Scripture to see what direction God gives us on time management.

Your time is brief (Ps. 90:12; 103:15-16). The first passage in Psalm 90 teaches us that making the most of our days brings us wisdom. In the second passage, David acknowledges life (time) is here one day and gone

the next. Understanding these two passages together, we see that



Jones

time is brief. It is here one day and gone the next. That is why Moses prayed in Psalm 90 for God to teach his people to make the most of their days. According to Moses, recognizing time is brief and taking advantage of the time we do have, will bring wisdom.

Do we recognize how brief time really is? How many times have we waited to tell that family member about Christ because we had plenty of time? How many times have we stayed at the office another hour or two and not spent the valuable time with our family we should have? How many times...?

You can waste your time (Eph. 5:8-17). Here, once again, the word "wise" is associated

with time management, "making the most of every opportuni-ty." In this passage Paul gives us guidance on how to live as "chil-dren of the light." Clearly he expresses that using one's time wisely is pleasing to the Lord.

Time is precious and as Christians we should use it wisely. We should make the most of every opportunity of time the Lord gives us to live for him. What does this mean? It means no more procrastination, no more wasting time. It means seizing every opportunity the Lord has given us!

You will give an account (Eccl. 3:1,17). "There is a time for everything," including judgment. We will have to give an account to God for the way we used our time here on earth. What kind of account will you give?

How do you use your time?

This topic is one that we do not hear preached or taught much in our churches, yet it is one that is important not only in our lives as "children of the light" but also because of the times we are living in.

Every day we are getting closer to the end of time as we know it. We are not guaranteed tomorrow. Time is a precious commodity, and we should be using it wisely.

What is it that you need to do right now to use your time wisely? Is it going to tell that family member or friend about Christ? Is it spending the time with your children and raising them in the Lord? Is it just somehow being a child of "the light" in a dark world?

Jones is associate pastor/youth minister at Monticello Church, Monticello.

Missionaries on job during Macau change

MACAU (BP)-Another jewel of the Orient has become simply a part of China. On Dec. 20, Macau — the first European colony in East Asia — followed Hong Kong becoming a sovereign territory of the largest nation in the world. What will the

change mean to Christians in Macau? To Southern Baptist missionaries their work? If Hong Kong is any example, not much.

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By Charles Marx

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"We've been watching Hong Kong for nearly two years," International Mission Board (IMB) they've maintained

quite a bit of autonomy and freedom. We're not anticipating many changes in our work.

That's good news for Macau but just two years ago, missionaries in Hong Kong weren't feeling so positive.

As 1997 loomed, it looked as if expansive visions of church-planting movements might be no more than a far-off dream. China's rep-utation on freedom of religion had preceded it. Many wondered if China would try the same restrictive policies in Hong Kong that it had in the rest of the country.

According to Southern Baptists in Hong Kong, most of those fears have gone unrealized. What would have been the most significant of those changes was made

CHANGING HANDS — The Portuguese colony of Macau once again became a terrimissionary Larry tory of China on Dec. 20. Christians in Macau wonder how the change will affect them, seven churches exist Ballew. "[Although but they take hope from Hong Kong's experience. Christians in Hong Kong say they've don't set the site. there have been maintained quite a bit of autonomy and freedom since the island reverted to Chinese sovchanges, ereignty two years ago. (BP photo by Guy Lyons)

irrelevant by a change in how IMB missionaries operate in Hong Kong.

"In the past, the traditional way of starting churches was to try to get a social service center like a kindergarten and then use the facility for church on Sunday," Addison says. "What has changed about that is that it is not only the Christian groups but also the Buddhist or other Asian religious groups that get them now.

"That doesn't affect us any more because as we've moved toward church-planting movements, we've looked for things that are more home-based and less overhead."

In Macau, IMB missionaries work in two teams. One plants churches among the Cantonese-speaking population. The other

ministers through medical work at Hope Clinic.

"What we are trying to do in Macau is initiate a church-planting movement that will penetrate all the segments of Cantonesespeaking people," says Ballew, who is the strategy coordinator for church planting in the city of Macau.

Roman Catholic Christianity first came to Macau in the middle of the 16th century when Portugal estab-lished the area as a trade colony, but its impact within the city now is minimal. The first Baptist church was established in Macau in 1910, but presently only

Most of the people of Macau consider themselves Buddhist, with mothers being the guardians of that tradition in the home. Family pressures force many to participate in ancestor worship.

"Many see Jesus as a Western God," Ballew says. "They don't understand the concept and truth of there being only one sovereign God. They see him as a God who fits into the Western world, but not their world."

As believers around the world have begun to pray for the people of Macau at this crucial time in their history, Ballew has seen doors open to ministry.

"In the past year, as a prefude to the handover, we've seen a lot more attention and prayer for Macau," Ballew says. "We've really seen that prayer here opens doors."

to serve as LifeWay trustee chair Gideon tapped

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) - As director of work outside the United States for Gideons International, Ken Speakman has traveled in more than 70 countries. He is also currently serving as chairman of trustees for LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention in Nashville.

When Speakman reports that members of

Gideons International distributed 52 million Scriptures in 1999, he's not talking about crates of Bibles shipped to distant locations to be opened by unknown persons.

Every Scripture distributed by the 142,000 Gideons in 173 countries is passed from the hands of a Gideon to an individual in a

school, hospital, prison, or other location.

"We don't mail or drop off
Scriptures," he said. "We can't save
anybody. The Word of God can and does. Our job is to get the Word of God to people who otherwise would never have a copy

Founded in 1899, the organization of business and professional men was named after Gideon of the Old Testament, "a man who was the least of his tribe but took 300 men and conquered the Midianites," he said.

Speakman, a Southern Baptist layman and member of Hermitage Hills Church, Nashville, became a Gideon in 1967 while working as a state manager for an insurance company in Nashville. He soon realized the ministry of the organization was becoming

an increasing priority in his life.

"Going to churches and giving Gideons messages were the times that I was the happiest," he recalled.

behalf of his family with the major reduction in income, fearing he would lack the resources to send his three daughters to college. He considers the fact that all three have earned graduate degrees a testimony to God's faithfulness.

For the past 20 years, Speakman has been responsible for the growth and management of Gideons outside the United States. More than one-third or 58,000 of Gideons live and work in other countries. In January 2000, he will become director of support services, a position that will involve continued international travel, fund-raising, and consulting with Gideons throughout the world.

Gideons employees must be dedicated Christians. Every workday begins with a 30-minute chapel service. "We read the Scripture and have prayer requests. Unbelievable prayer requests come in here.

"At LifeWay, I'm impressed by the quality and commitment of our employees." Speakman is proud of the role played by LifeWay in providing Christian resources for churches and individuals.

"We are discipling and training our people. We are building up the faith of people

in our churches," he said.

"I think our future is bright," Speakman said. "Business is going to change and I think LifeWay is willing to make changes in the right way, keeping the focus on the spiritual. At Gideons, we do not change our means to get to the end. LifeWay also has to keep its focus to provide the best Christian literature and change lives."

SPANNING THE GLOBE — As director of work outside the U.S. for Gideons International, With the support of Reba, his wife of Ken Speakman has traveled in more than 70 countries. Speakman, who also serves as chair- 40 years, he reduced his salary by man of trustees for LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention, has pre- two-thirds in December 1968 to join SPANNING THE GLOBE — As director of work outside the U.S. for Gideons International, sented Bibles to heads of state including Mobutu Sese Seko, former head of the African nation the staff of Gideons International. of Zaire, and to the late Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. (BP photo by Morris Abernathy) He recalled the anxiety he felt on